

*Church of Brethren*

# THE LAST FORTY

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## TEN

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**N**O, I don't believe in foreign missions. That is all there is to that. I'm a home mission man. I think it's plain foolishness to go spending money on other people in lands we don't know anything about as long as America is not right. Let's convert America. Let's git our own country pure of its politics and the churches straightened up at home before going elsewhere. Anyhow, we never had anything to do with making the heathen what they are, and why bother about them when there is so much to do at home? "

Thus spoke Farmer Watkins. And he did it with much emphasis, too, for had he not often made this same speech?—so often that he was thoroughly grounded in its correctness!

His neighbor, Bates, was a full minute waiting to give an answer; then he calmly asked this question: "Thomas, how many acres have you in your farm,—I mean the home farm, not the others? "

"One hundred thirty," answered Brother Watkins, and with a grin he added, "Well, it looks like you're wanting to change the subject pretty quick, hey? "

"Just a moment, please, Thomas," interrupted Brother Bates. "One hundred and thirty acres. Now if I recall correctly you have three forties in a line, one behind the other, and then ten acres across the road from the main tract on which your home buildings are located.

"You're right," replied Brother Watkins.

"Now, Thomas, while I may not be near as good a farmer as you are, permit me to make a suggestion about how you should farm your home one hundred and thirty. It looks to me like you are not taking the wise course at all. Last evening I saw you returning from a hard day's work on the back forty, the one lying farthest from the house. Evidently you are getting ready to sow fall wheat, for you were bringing back your plow and harrow. It was a hot day as we all know and your fine horses looked all fagged out. You certainly are foolish to work so hard cultivating that back forty and expect good crops way back there."

"Hold on there, Brother Bates!" interrupted Watkins.

"Now wait, Thomas," insisted Bates and he continued. "I understand you are going to put a new fence around this back forty, tile the low part in the one corner, and bring it up to good yielding. Here is my objection to such a course. Why spend time and money on these outlying fields like this back forty? You seemingly forget that ten-acre tract around your house and you know conditions are far from right there. Your barn needs paint, the out-buildings need repairing, the wall about the well should be fixed up, else disease may come to your family, the garden is not clear of weeds, the potato patch needs plowing, the front yard needs mowing and bare spots reseeding, the flower beds need new late varieties and the drive should have some fresh gravel on it. Surely you act foolishly to go back to that farthest forty to till it until you get this home ten acres up to the

highest state of fitness and beauty possible. Now honest, Thomas, in the light of what you said at first, am I not correct in what I am telling you? "

For a moment Farmer Watkins was confused. His face flushed. But he was a noble man who meant to do the right, and after a moment he straightened up and looking at his brother with clear, kindly eyes, now swimming in tears, he said, "I never thot of the foreign lands in that way."

His neighbor seemingly did not notice the remark as he spoke further. "Just why the Lord made the world as he has I do not know, but he seems to have fenced it into different fields. There is the India field and the China field where our church has noble workers; oh, yes, and there is the Scandinavian field where we have others doing splendid work. Then there are other fields of our Father's fencing which our church has not yet entered,—like South America and Africa and Australia, and Russia and Persia. His Son meant that we should farm the back fields when he in his last words talked about the "uttermost parts of the earth," and if we are to be wise husbandmen for him I am sure that in these back forties we will be just as anxious that WE plow and sow that He may reap into the heavenly garner as you are to cultivate that back forty of your home farm. It surely would be just as foolish to keep all his laborers in America till America is pure as it would be to confine your farming to the home ten till you have it just what you want it to be. And, Brother Watkins, no one knows this better than you do."

"I have no more to say, save to thank you, Brother Bates. But this comes to me now. I am too old to go and farm God's back forties myself, but I am willing to send a hand to work in my place. Count on me to support one of our workers on THE LAST FORTY."

G. B. R.



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UTTERMOST PARTS  
OF THE EARTH :**

**AND SAMARIA**

**AND JUDEA**

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at  
Jerusalem**